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ABSTRACT

The Agenda for Action is a model for institutionalizing a continuous and rational system of curriculum improvement. It defines the process and procedures whereby all teacher education and school service personnel programs in the College of Education at Bowling Green State University are to be reviewed and subsequently redesigned to assure that they are consistent with (1) state accreditation and certification standards, (2) National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education accreditation standards, (3) present and emergent College/University missions and goals, and (4) research findings relative to professional performance. In addition to involving four College Councils and an Administrative Staff, the Agenda has precipitated the participation of 125 professional teacher education and arts and science faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, elementary and secondary teachers, specialists, and administrators in the deliberations of six Program Area Coordinating Units and several Task Force groups. The function of the Program Area Coordinating Units is to redesign all programs within their respective areas to meet the four objectives of the Agenda. Each of the College Councils and the Administrative Staff have specified developmental and/or monitoring tasks. The immediate goal of the Agenda is the preparation of a comprehensive plan showing the process, procedures, and timeline by which specified curricular and organizational redesign will be implemented. (RC)

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AGENDA FOR ACTION

A METAPROGRAM FOR THE REDESIGN
OF TEACHER EDUCATION

in the

College of Education
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, Ohio

December 1975

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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D. G. Elsass

David G. Elsass, Dean
Chief Institutional Representative

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AGENDA FOR ACTION

Summary

The Agenda for Action is best termed a "metaprogram" in that it is a model for institutionalizing a continuous and rational system of curriculum improvement, a program for generating higher quality programs than those which presently exist. Specifically it defines the process and procedures whereby all teacher education and school service personnel programs in the College are to be reviewed and subsequently redesigned to assure that they are consistent with:

1. State accreditation and certification standards;
2. NCATE accreditation standards;
3. present and emergent College/University missions and goals;
4. research findings relative to professional performance.

The Agenda uses the extant organizational structure of the College as fully as possible to initiate and monitor the change process and to assure that curriculum evaluation and improvement will be an ongoing, continuous activity within each program. The Agenda is based upon the rationale that significant curricular improvements occur and persist only when the changes they entail are arrived at, acceptable to, and supported by the faculty and the administration which will implement them.

In addition to involving the four College Councils and the Administrative Staff, the Agenda has precipitated the participation of some 125 professional teacher education and arts and science faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, and elementary and secondary teachers, specialists, and administrators in the deliberations of six Program

Area Coordinating Units and several Task Force groups.

The primary curriculum planning groups are the Program Area Coordinating Units. Their function is to redesign all programs within their respective areas to meet the objectives indicated above. Task Force groups have and will continue to be formed on an ad hoc basis to address concerns cutting across program areas such as the development of models for early exploratory field experiences; reading, media, human relations components; selection/retention policies, etc.

Each of the College Councils and the Administrative Staff have specified developmental and/or monitoring tasks. These include but are not limited to (1) developing and implementing strategies for securing resources to support teacher education programs, (2) formulating and implementing policies and procedures relative to faculty assignments, development, promotion, remuneration; (3) planning and installing cooperative arrangements with elementary and secondary schools, (4) effecting more comprehensive follow-up of graduates, (5) generating long range plans for teacher education at B.G.S.U., and (6) continuously reviewing progress in relation to the specified objectives.

The immediate goal of the Agenda is the preparation of a comprehensive plan showing the process, procedures and timeline by which specified curricular and organizational redesign will be implemented. The long-term goal is the implementation of these changes with a target date of July 1, 1980, the designated date for the implementation of the new State accreditation standards.

Description and development of the program

The College of Education at B.G.S.U., like most institutions, tends toward homeostasis. Changes of significance - and particularly changes resulting in improvement of the quality of programs - often originate from pressure without rather than through desire and insight from within.

At Bowling Green several forceful external determinants have been at work: (1) in 1973 the College underwent an NCATE evaluation; (2) in 1974 the College was evaluated by the Ohio State Department of Education; (3) in 1975 the State of Ohio adopted a new set of standards for the accreditation of teacher education institutions; (4) the nature of supply and demand in educational fields has shifted significantly; and (5) the needs of practitioners are requiring new and different activities on the part of teacher education institutions.

External forces such as these often elicit resistance from or sporadic unsystematic responses by Colleges of Education unless the institution has a mechanism whereby it can assess both external and internal needs, establish reasonable goals, define procedures and resources for accomplishing those goals, and gather information whereby adjustments may be made and outcomes determined. In short, what is needed is the institutionalization of a process for effecting a continuous, rational system of curriculum improvement. Such is the nature and intent of the Agenda for Action at B.G.S.U.

An inductive rather than a deductive approach characterizes the processes associated with the Agenda. A basic assumption made is that involvement, commitment, and investment of persons associated with programs is essential to the successful improvement of those programs.

A second assumption underlying the Agenda is that wherever possible the extant organizational structure of the College should be employed as the vehicle for change. However, due to the fact that there are some fifty different teacher education and school service personnel programs (undergraduate and graduate) in the College and that redesign must necessarily occur first in relation to programs rather than departments, it seemed essential to establish clusters comprised of programs with certain commonalities. Furthermore, the task of developing curriculum plans which reflect agreed upon changes was accepted as a formidable one. For this reason six new units, the Program Area Coordinating Units, were established to carry out certain designated curriculum planning functions. This also served to broaden the involvement of faculty, students, and practitioners in the overall design enterprise. It also provided the means for effecting a marriage of programs and departments.

In their deliberations the Program Area Coordinating Units soon recognized that there are common problems and needs across program areas. Therefore, ad hoc Task Force groups have been formed to cope with these concerns. For example, groups have been asked to address such tasks as (1) the design of initial-exploratory experiences for entering students, (2) a set of alternatives for preparing all entry-level teachers in the teaching of reading and communication skills as these relate to their teaching fields, (3) means for ensuring that teacher educators are competent in the use of media, etc.

Meanwhile the Administrative Staff and the four College Councils are working concurrently on other tasks. Some of these are summarized below.

Administrative Staff - develop and implement strategies for securing

resources; establish funding necessary to attain projected support levels for each program; establish priorities for varied levels of funding if full support not available; develop scenarios depicting potential cooperative arrangements with elementary-secondary schools; outline proposed extension of organizational structure of College to effect wider involvement of school personnel.

Administrative Council - report faculty utilization within each program in terms of load, type of assignment, cost factors; determine adjustments relative to projected changes so as to maximize faculty benefits and contributions.

Program Council - require regular reports from the Program Area Coordinating Units and Task Force groups; review curricular proposals; determine need for College policies; identify common problems; endorse curriculum designs and standards for selection/retention of students.

Personnel Policies and Professional Growth Council - develop policies and procedures relative to faculty selection, assignment, development, retention, promotion and remuneration which are consistent with objectives of the Agenda.

Research, Evaluation and Development Council - produce a well-defined long-range projection for the future development of professional education programs in the College.

Education Council - require regular reports from all other Councils; monitor intra-University relationships; review and eventually endorse program descriptions, policies and procedures; with the Administrative Staff prepare statement of process, procedures, and timeline by which implementation of all elements of redesign are to occur.

Objectives

The goals and objectives of the Agenda for Action have been indicated in the summary.

Personnel involved

All professional education faculty as well as administrators associated with teacher education and school service personnel programs are either directly or indirectly involved with the Agenda. At present ninety-two persons, including students and practitioners, have accepted membership on the six Program Area Coordinating Units. Some of these faculty and administrators as well as others comprise the membership of the various Councils, each of which includes student representatives as well.

The Assistant Dean for Program Coordination has major responsibility for facilitating the total effort; however, six faculty members were asked and accepted the responsibility for acting as coordinators of the Program Area Coordinating Units.

Budget

Budgetary support for the Agenda has been provided at the College level. To date expenditures for the year total approximately \$3000. These include clerical and duplicating services, stipends to coordinators for pre-quarter work, stipend for an external consultant, support for a two-day orientation, work session for members of Program Area Coordinating Units, and travel reimbursement for practitioners to come to campus meetings.

Evaluation

Formative evaluation is ongoing and intrinsic to the design itself in that the various Units and Councils serve as checks and balances to aid in the identification of modifications which are desirable with respect both to goals and means for attaining them.

Summative evaluation will occur with implementation internally through established College/University program evaluation procedures and externally by accrediting agencies.